IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

In re Patent Application of:)Attorney Docket No.: F-212

Frederick W. Ryan, Jr. et al.)Group Art Unit: 3621

Serial No.: 09/748,889)Examiner: C. Scherr

Filed: Dec. 27, 2000)Date: April 7, 2008

Confirmation No.: 5705

Title: Mail Piece Verification System

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPELLANTS' BRIEF ON APPEAL

Sir:

 This is an appeal pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 134 and 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.191 et seq. from the final rejection of claims 1-31 of the above-identified application mailed January 14, 2008. A Notice of Appeal is being filed concurrently herewith.

 The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. **16-1885**.

I.   Real Party in Interest

The real party in interest in this appeal is Pitney Bowes Inc., a Delaware corporation, the assignee of this application.

II.   Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no appeals or interferences known to Appellants, their legal representative, or the assignee which may be related to, directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this appeal.

III.   Status of Claims

Claims 1-31 are pending in this application and are on appeal. Claims 1-5 and 7-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter (U.S. 5,280,531) in view of Moore (U.S. 5,917,925). Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter in view of Moore and further in view of Fleming (U.S. 5,953,710).

IV.   Status of Amendments

There were no amendments to the claims filed subsequent to the Office Action dated January 14, 2008. Therefore, the claims as set forth in Appendix A to this brief are those as set forth before the final rejection.

V.   Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

This summary and references to specific page and line numbers, figures and reference characters is not intended to supplant or limit the description of the claimed subject matter as provided in the claims as recited in Appendix A, as understood in light of the entire specification.

Appellants' invention is directed to a mail piece verification system for processing a mail piece that includes an incoming mail processing center for receiving a mail piece and obtaining data from the mail piece. The mail piece data is uploaded to a data center that performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream from the incoming mail processing center. The outgoing mail processing center then uses the instructions, received from the data center, to process the mail piece.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces that comprises "an incoming mail processing center for receiving the mail piece and obtaining the mail piece data, the incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces;" (see Fig. 1, item 120 and corresponding description on page 5, line 19 to page 6, line 26), "an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces;" (see Fig. 1, item 150 and corresponding description on page 6, line 31 to page 7, line 4), "and a data center in operative communication with the incoming mail processing center and the outgoing mail processing center" (see Fig. 1, item 130 and corresponding description on page 5, lines 23-27), wherein "the incoming mail processing center uploads the mail piece data to the data center; the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions based upon the verification check to the outgoing mail processing center; and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece." (See Fig. 4, items 402-422 and corresponding description on page 9, line 27 to page 11, line 23).

Independent claim 15 is directed to method of operating a mail piece verification system to process a mail piece that comprises "obtaining mail piece data associated with a mail piece using at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, the plurality of mail processing machines being located at an incoming mail processing center;" (see Fig. 4, item 402 and corresponding description on page 9, lines 27-29), "uploading the mail piece data to a data center;" (see Fig. 4, item 410 and corresponding description on page 10, lines 19-21), "performing a verification check on the mail piece data;" (see Fig. 4, item 414 and corresponding description on page 10, line 23, to page 11, line 4), "downloading instructions based upon the verification check to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces;" (see Fig. 4, item 416 and corresponding description on page 11, lines 5-7), "and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece." (See Fig. 4, item 422 and corresponding description on page 11, lines 21-23).

Independent claim 27 is directed to a method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data associated with a mail piece that comprises "receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center;" (see Fig. 4, item 410 and corresponding description on page 10, lines 19-21), "performing a verification check on the mail piece data;" (see Fig. 4, item 414 and corresponding description on page 10, line 23, to page 11, line 4), "downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces;" (see Fig. 4, item 416 and corresponding description on page 11, lines 5-7), "and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece."   (See Fig. 4, item 422 and corresponding description on page 11, lines 21-23).

Additional features of the invention are discussed below in the Argument section of this Brief.

VI.   Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

A.   Whether the subject matter defined in claims 1-5 and 7-31 is obvious over Hunter (U.S. 5,280,531) in view of Moore (U.S. 5,917,925).

B.   Whether the subject matter defined in claim 6 is obvious over Hunter in view of Moore and further in view of Fleming (U.S. 5,953,710).

VII.   Argument

As discussed in detail below, the final rejection of claims 1-31 is devoid of any factual or legal premise that supports the position of unpatentability. It is respectfully submitted that the rejection does not even meet the threshold burden of presenting a prima facie case of unpatentability. For this reason alone, Appellants are entitled to grant of a patent. In re Oetiker, 24 U.S.P.Q.2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

A.   The subject matter defined in claims 1-5 and 7-31 is not obvious over Hunter (U.S. 5,280,531) in view of Moore (U.S. 5,917,925).

(i)   Claims 1-5 and 7-14 are not obvious over Hunter in view of Moore.

As noted above, Appellants' invention is directed to a mail piece verification system for processing a mail piece that includes an incoming mail processing center for receiving a mail piece and obtaining data from the mail piece. The mail piece data is uploaded to a data center that performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream from the incoming mail processing center. The outgoing mail processing center then uses the instructions, received from the data center, to process the mail piece.

In view of the above, claim 1 is directed to a mail piece verification system for processing mail pieces that comprises "an incoming mail processing center for receiving the mail piece and obtaining the mail piece data, the incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and a data center in operative communication with the incoming mail processing center and the outgoing mail processing center" wherein "the incoming mail processing center uploads the mail piece data to the data center; the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions based upon the verification check to the outgoing mail processing center; and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece."

Hunter is directed to a method and system for analyzing the usage of postage meters with respect to the history of meter recharges for the purpose of detecting fraudulent or improper usage of the meters. In Hunter, a conventional transport system singulates a mail stream and transports mail pieces past a conventional optical character recognition (OCR) system. As each mailpiece is transported past the OCR system, the postal indicia is scanned to read at least the postage amount and meter identification number. The OCR is connected to a data processing system into which the meter identification numbers and postage amounts are input, which produces expenditure reports that describe the expenditures of particular meters as identified by the meter identification number in the postal indicia. The refill history of particular meters is also input into the data processing system. The data processing system produces discrepancy reports that identify those meters where expenditures differ from what would be expected in light of the refill history by more than some predetermined threshold. (See Col. 2, line 48 to Col. 3, line 42).

Thus, the system in Hunter simply scans postage indicia and stores a cumulative record of postage amounts expended by a meter, and compares the amount expended with a refill amount to determine if a large discrepancy exists, i.e., if the meter is printing more postage than has been refilled to the meter. If a discrepancy exists, a report is generated to identify the meter such that an appropriate inspection of the meter can be performed. There is no disclosure,

teaching or suggestion in Hunter of an "incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and a data center in operative communication with the incoming mail processing center and the outgoing mail processing center" wherein "the incoming mail processing center uploads the mail piece data to the data center; the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions based upon the verification check to the outgoing mail processing center; and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece" as is recited in claim 1.

The reference to Moore does not cure any of the above deficiencies. Moore is directed to a method for authenticating indicia marks to reduce the amount of counterfeit marks. The system generates a unique pattern comprising encoded input data that comprises a unique customer identifier and a unique postal service identifier. The unique pattern is applied to a mail piece as an indicia using an ink formulation comprising one or more chemical agents detectable when exposed to a visible or non-visible frequency range of light. The authentication process is completed by exposing the goods to light in the visible or non-visible frequency range thereby making the pattern detectable, scanning the detectable pattern on the mail piece, degenerating the pattern to retrieve the encoded input data, decoding the encoded data to retrieve the input data, and comparing the input data against all stored input data in a mass storage device to determine whether the indicia is authentic. (Col. 8, lines 1-24).

Note that the scanning performed in the system of Moore is done utilizing a field reader that is a hand held device housed in a briefcase or the like. (Col. 24, lines 7-10). At any point within the mail system the indicia mark affixed to the mail piece can be read on site with the field reader. All information contained in the indicia mark is transmitted back to the appropriate host computer if the information pertains directly to the customer or is "customer specific," or transmitted back to the control computer 12 is the information pertains to the postal service operation or the vendor's operation. (Col. 11, lines 8-17). The control computer 12 and the host computer 14 receive the data from the field reader, and interface with the encryption unit 15

where the message is decoded and converted to clear text. The control computer then searches the database to validate the indicia mark and any other postal service specific information. The host computer reads and validates any customer specific information. Once validated, both the control and the host computers send messages back to the field reader 18 which displays the decoded message and any other pertinent information pertaining to this specific indicia, i.e., place, time of marking, or destination. If the marked mail piece is counterfeit or has been received at the wrong point of final distribution, an invalid signal is transmitted and displayed on the field reader computer screen. (Col. 12, lines 25-43). The reader receives validation while the goods are under the custody and control of the reader operator. (Col. 13, lines 60-62).

Thus, in Moore, a postal clerk scans a mail piece, using a hand held reader device. Information from the mail piece is transmitted to a computer, where the information is validated. A message, including the information from the mail piece, is then returned to the reader device to display to the postal clerk. If the indicia is counterfeit, an invalid signal is displayed. The system in Moore, however, discloses no more than that as described with respect to conventional verification systems on page 3 of the present Specification. Note that in Moore, the mail piece must be removed from the mail piece processing path by a postal clerk, scanned by the postal clerk using the hand held reader, and then remain with the postal clerk after it has been scanned while the data is transmitted to the control computer and host computer, the data is validated by the control computer and host computer, and a message from each computer is returned to the reader held by the postal clerk. The amount of time required to perform this operation would make it impossible to verify any more than a minimal amount of mail pieces currently processed by the postal service.

The present invention, in contrast, comprises an incoming mail processing center, which employs one or more mail processing machines, and an outgoing mail processing center, which employs one or more of the same mail processing machines, that is located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center. The incoming mail processing center obtains the mail piece data and uploads the mail piece data to the data center. The data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to the outgoing mail processing center. The outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions received from the data center to control operation of at least one of the mail

processing machines to process the mail piece. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Moore of an incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces and an outgoing mail processing center that includes a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, where the incoming mail processing center obtains the mail piece data and uploads the mail piece data to the data center, the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to the outgoing mail processing center, and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions received from the data center to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece.

Even if, for arguments sake, the hand held field reader of Moore was deemed to be analogous with an outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces (which it clearly is not), the system of Moore does not use the instructions downloaded from a data center to control operation of a mail processing machine that performs automated processing of mail pieces to process the mail piece.

There is simply no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in either Hunter or Moore, alone or in combination, of a mail piece verification system for processing a mail piece that comprises an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and a data center in operative communication with the incoming mail processing center and the outgoing mail processing center wherein the incoming mail processing center uploads the mail piece data to the data center; the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions based upon the verification check to the outgoing mail processing center; and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece as is recited in claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claim 1 is in error and should be reversed. Claims 2-5 and 7-14 are dependent upon claim 1, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 1. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claims 2-5 and 7-14 is in error and should be reversed.

(a)   <u>Claims 4, 7 and 13 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 1</u>.

Claims 4, 7 and 13 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 1 in that they include novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claims 4, 7 and 13 include the additional limitations of the system using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; the outgoing mail processing center represents a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route; and the data center limits the download of the instructions to the particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers. The Office Action contends that Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore are reproduced below.

> The foregoing discussion has been directed to the invention embodied as a postal indicia marking and tracking system. Other embodiments of the system for anti-counterfeiting and anti-diversion systems are also possible. An added feature of the present invention is the real-time nature of validation in any embodiment. Piracy, counterfeiting, and/or diversion commonly occur at the plant or just beyond its gates. The present system allows the functionality of immediate interception on the yard, or the backdoor of the plant. A field reader may be used for inspection at the plant gate to verify that goods going out of the plant gates are authentic, marked, and correctly routed. As a further example, a field reader or point of distribution and sale reader may be used to "instantly" authenticate a package module, mailpieces, invoices, or any marked article at the time of receipt, sale or processing. It should be understood, however, that this can only authenticate the printed document, and can not authenticate any signature affixed thereto which may or may not be forged. The creation and marking of marks is

real-time. The marker PC at the site reports back to the
host computer and therefore all the markings that have
been prepared for the day's operation will be in the
archives or in the records of the host computer 14.
Immediately after the goods are marked, they can be
inspected and a reading determines the (in)validity of
the mark through the host computer 14.

There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Moore, that discloses, teaches or suggests the system using mail piece data to determine a delivery route for a mail piece, or the data center limiting the download of instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers.

(b)   <u>Claims 5, 8 and 11 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 1.</u>

Claims 5, 8 and 11 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 1 in that they include novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claims 5, 8 and 11 include the additional limitations of the system using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and the system using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center. The Office Action contends that Fig. 2 and Col. 5, lines 54-63 of Hunter disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 5, lines 49-63 of Hunter are reproduced below.

FIG. 2 shows a flow chart of the operation of data
processing system 40 in scanning a mail piece. At 110
system 40 inputs the next mail piece scan and at 112
tests to determine if the meter identification number is
recognized; that is, is the meter identification number
is legible and valid for this system. If the meter
identification number is recognized then at 114-system
40 checks to determine if that number is included in the
meter inspection file. If the number is not in meter
inspection file 80 then at 116 system 40 tests to
determine if the postage amount is recognized as a valid
amount; that is, is valid for that class of mail and is
legible. If the postage amount and meter identification

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number are recognized then at 120 the expenditure record
for the identified meter is incremented.
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There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Hunter, of the system making any type of determination of service class for a mail piece, or using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

> (ii)   Claims 15-26 are not obvious over Hunter in view of Moore.

Independent claim 15 is directed to a method of operating a mail piece verification system to process a mail piece that comprises "obtaining mail piece data associated with a mail piece using at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, the plurality of mail processing machines being located at an incoming mail processing center; uploading the mail piece data to a data center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions based upon the verification check to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece."

Hunter is directed to a method and system for analyzing the usage of postage meters with respect to the history of meter recharges for the purpose of detecting fraudulent or improper usage of the meters. In Hunter, a conventional transport system singulates a mail stream and transports mail pieces past a conventional optical character recognition (OCR) system. As each mailpiece is transported past the OCR system, the postal indicia is scanned to read at least the postage amount and meter identification number. The OCR is connected to a data processing system into which the meter identification numbers and postage amounts are input, which produces expenditure reports that describe the expenditures of particular meters as identified by the meter identification number in the postal indicia. The refill history of particular meters is also input into the data processing system. The data processing system produces discrepancy reports

that identify those meters where expenditures differ from what would be expected in light of the refill history by more than some predetermined threshold. (See Col. 2, line 48 to Col. 3, line 42).

Thus, the system in Hunter simply scans postage indicia and stores a cumulative record of postage amounts expended by a meter, and compares the amount expended with a refill amount to determine if a large discrepancy exists, i.e., if the meter is printing more postage than has been refilled to the meter. If a discrepancy exists, a report is generated to identify the meter such that an appropriate inspection of the meter can be performed. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Hunter of an "obtaining mail piece data associated with a mail piece using at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, the plurality of mail processing machines being located at an incoming mail processing center; uploading the mail piece data to a data center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions based upon the verification check to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece." as is recited in claim 15.

The reference to Moore does not cure any of the above deficiencies. Moore is directed to a method for authenticating indicia marks to reduce the amount of counterfeit marks. The system generates a unique pattern comprising encoded input data that comprises a unique customer identifier and a unique postal service identifier. The unique pattern is applied to a mail piece as an indicia using an ink formulation comprising one or more chemical agents detectable when exposed to a visible or non-visible frequency range of light. The authentication process is completed by exposing the goods to light in the visible or non-visible frequency range thereby making the pattern detectable, scanning the detectable pattern on the mail piece, degenerating the pattern to retrieve the encoded input data, decoding the encoded data to retrieve the input data, and comparing the input data against all stored input data in a mass storage device to determine whether the indicia is authentic. (Col. 8, lines 1-24).

Note that the scanning performed in the system of Moore is done utilizing a field reader that is a hand held device housed in a briefcase or the like. (Col. 24, lines 7-10). At any point within the mail system the indicia mark affixed to the mail piece can be read on site with the field reader. All information contained in the indicia mark is transmitted back to the appropriate host computer if the information pertains directly to the customer or is "customer specific," or transmitted back to the control computer 12 is the information pertains to the postal service operation or the vendor's operation. (Col. 11, lines 8-17). The control computer 12 and the host computer 14 receive the data from the field reader, and interface with the encryption unit 15 where the message is decoded and converted to clear text. The control computer then searches the database to validate the indicia mark and any other postal service specific information. The host computer reads and validates any customer specific information. Once validated, both the control and the host computers send messages back to the field reader 18 which displays the decoded message and any other pertinent information pertaining to this specific indicia, i.e., place, time of marking, or destination. If the marked mail piece is counterfeit or has been received at the wrong point of final distribution, an invalid signal is transmitted and displayed on the field reader computer screen. (Col. 12, lines 25-43). The reader receives validation while the goods are under the custody and control of the reader operator. (Col. 13, lines 60-62).

Thus, in Moore, a postal clerk scans a mail piece, using a hand held reader device. Information from the mail piece is transmitted to a computer, where the information is validated. A message, including the information from the mail piece, is then returned to the reader device to display to the postal clerk. If the indicia is counterfeit, an invalid signal is displayed. The system in Moore, however, discloses no more than that as described with respect to conventional verification systems on page 3 of the present Specification. Note that in Moore, the mail piece must be removed from the mail piece processing path by a postal clerk, scanned by the postal clerk using the hand held reader, and then remain with the postal clerk after it has been scanned while the data is transmitted to the control computer and host computer, the data is validated by the control computer and host computer, and a message from each computer is returned to the reader held by the postal clerk. The amount of time required to perform this operation would make it impossible to verify any more than a minimal amount of mail pieces currently processed by the postal service.

The present invention, in contrast, comprises an incoming mail processing center, which employs one or more mail processing machines, and an outgoing mail processing center, which employs one or more of the same mail processing machines, that is located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center. The incoming mail processing center obtains the mail piece data and uploads the mail piece data to the data center. The data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to the outgoing mail processing center. The outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions received from the data center to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines to process the mail piece. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Moore of an incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces and an outgoing mail processing center that includes a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, where the incoming mail processing center obtains the mail piece data and uploads the mail piece data to the data center, the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to the outgoing mail processing center, and the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions received from the data center to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece.

Even if, for arguments sake, the hand held field reader of Moore was deemed to be analogous with an outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces (which it clearly is not), the system of Moore does not use the instructions downloaded from a data center to control operation of a mail processing machine that performs automated processing of mail pieces to process the mail piece.

There is simply no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in either Hunter or Moore, alone or in combination, of a method of operating a mail piece verification system to process a mail piece that comprises obtaining mail piece data associated with a mail piece using at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, the plurality of mail processing machines being located at an incoming mail processing center; uploading the mail piece data to a data center; performing a verification check on the mail piece

data; downloading instructions based upon the verification check to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece as is recited in claim 15.

For at least the above reasons, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claim 15 is in error and should be reversed. Claims 16-26 are dependent upon claim 15, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 15. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 15, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claims 16-26 is in error and should be reversed.

(a)   <u>Claims 17, 21 and 26 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 15</u>.

Claims 17, 21 and 26 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 15 in that they include novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claims 17, 21 and 26 include the additional limitations of using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route. The Office Action contends that Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore are reproduced below.

> The foregoing discussion has been directed to the invention embodied as a postal indicia marking and tracking system. Other embodiments of the system for anti-counterfeiting and anti-diversion systems are also possible. An added feature of the present invention is the real-time nature of validation in any embodiment. Piracy, counterfeiting, and/or diversion commonly occur at the plant or just beyond its gates. The present system allows the functionality of immediate interception on the yard, or the backdoor of the plant. A field reader may be used for inspection at the plant gate to verify that goods going out of the plant gates are authentic, marked, and correctly routed. As a

further example, a field reader or point of distribution
and sale reader may be used to "instantly" authenticate
a package module, mailpieces, invoices, or any marked
article at the time of receipt, sale or processing. It
should be understood, however, that this can only
authenticate the printed document, and can not
authenticate any signature affixed thereto which may or
may not be forged. The creation and marking of marks is
real-time. The marker PC at the site reports back to the
host computer and therefore all the markings that have
been prepared for the day's operation will be in the
archives or in the records of the host computer 14.
Immediately after the goods are marked, they can be
inspected and a reading determines the (in)validity of
the mark through the host computer 14.

There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Moore, that discloses, teaches or suggests using mail piece data to determine a delivery route for a mail piece, or of a data center limiting the download of instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

(b)   Claims 18, 22 and 24 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 15.

Claims 18, 22 and 24 are patentable separate and apart from their dependency on claim 15 in that they include novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claims 18, 22 and 24 include the additional limitations of using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center. The Office Action contends that Fig. 2 and Col. 5, lines 54-63 of Hunter disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 5, lines 49-63 of Hunter are reproduced below.

FIG. 2 shows a flow chart of the operation of data
processing system 40 in scanning a mail piece. At 110
system 40 inputs the next mail piece scan and at 112
tests to determine if the meter identification number is
recognized; that is, is the meter identification number

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is legible and valid for this system. If the meter
identification number is recognized then at 114-system
40 checks to determine if that number is included in the
meter inspection file. If the number is not in meter
inspection file 80 then at 116 system 40 tests to
determine if the postage amount is recognized as a valid
amount; that is, is valid for that class of mail and is
legible. If the postage amount and meter identification
number are recognized then at 120 the expenditure record
for the identified meter is incremented.
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There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Hunter, of any type of determination of service class for a mail piece, or using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

      (iii)   <u>Claims 27-31 are not obvious over Hunter in view of Moore</u>.

Independent claim 27 is directed to a method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data associated with a mail piece that comprises "receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece."

Hunter is directed to a method and system for analyzing the usage of postage meters with respect to the history of meter recharges for the purpose of detecting fraudulent or improper usage of the meters. In Hunter, a conventional transport system singulates a mail stream and transports mail pieces past a conventional optical character recognition (OCR) system. As each mailpiece is transported past the OCR system, the postal indicia is scanned to read at least the postage amount and meter identification number. The OCR is connected to a data processing

system into which the meter identification numbers and postage amounts are input, which produces expenditure reports that describe the expenditures of particular meters as identified by the meter identification number in the postal indicia. The refill history of particular meters is also input into the data processing system. The data processing system produces discrepancy reports that identify those meters where expenditures differ from what would be expected in light of the refill history by more than some predetermined threshold. (See Col. 2, line 48 to Col. 3, line 42).

Thus, the system in Hunter simply scans postage indicia and stores a cumulative record of postage amounts expended by a meter, and compares the amount expended with a refill amount to determine if a large discrepancy exists, i.e., if the meter is printing more postage than has been refilled to the meter. If a discrepancy exists, a report is generated to identify the meter such that an appropriate inspection of the meter can be performed. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Hunter of a method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data that comprises "receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece" as is recited in claim 27.

The reference to Moore does not cure any of the above deficiencies. Moore is directed to a method for authenticating indicia marks to reduce the amount of counterfeit marks. The system generates a unique pattern comprising encoded input data that comprises a unique customer identifier and a unique postal service identifier. The unique pattern is applied to a mail piece as an indicia using an ink formulation comprising one or more chemical agents detectable when exposed to a visible or non-visible frequency range of light. The authentication process is completed by exposing the goods to light in the visible or non-visible frequency range thereby making the pattern detectable, scanning the detectable pattern on the mail piece, degenerating the

pattern to retrieve the encoded input data, decoding the encoded data to retrieve the input data, and comparing the input data against all stored input data in a mass storage device to determine whether the indicia is authentic. (Col. 8, lines 1-24).

Note that the scanning performed in the system of Moore is done utilizing a field reader that is a hand held device housed in a briefcase or the like. (Col. 24, lines 7-10). At any point within the mail system the indicia mark affixed to the mail piece can be read on site with the field reader. All information contained in the indicia mark is transmitted back to the appropriate host computer if the information pertains directly to the customer or is "customer specific," or transmitted back to the control computer 12 is the information pertains to the postal service operation or the vendor's operation. (Col. 11, lines 8-17). The control computer 12 and the host computer 14 receive the data from the field reader, and interface with the encryption unit 15 where the message is decoded and converted to clear text. The control computer then searches the database to validate the indicia mark and any other postal service specific information. The host computer reads and validates any customer specific information. Once validated, both the control and the host computers send messages back to the field reader 18 which displays the decoded message and any other pertinent information pertaining to this specific indicia, i.e., place, time of marking, or destination. If the marked mail piece is counterfeit or has been received at the wrong point of final distribution, an invalid signal is transmitted and displayed on the field reader computer screen. (Col. 12, lines 25-43). The reader receives validation while the goods are under the custody and control of the reader operator. (Col. 13, lines 60-62).

Thus, in Moore, a postal clerk scans a mail piece, using a hand held reader device. Information from the mail piece is transmitted to a computer, where the information is validated. A message, including the information from the mail piece, is then returned to the reader device to display to the postal clerk. If the indicia is counterfeit, an invalid signal is displayed. The system in Moore, however, discloses no more than that as described with respect to conventional verification systems on page 3 of the present Specification. Note that in Moore, the mail piece must be removed from the mail piece processing path by a postal clerk, scanned by the postal clerk using the hand held reader, and then remain with the postal clerk after it has been scanned while the data is transmitted to the control computer and host computer, the data is validated by the control computer and host computer, and a message from each computer is returned to the

reader held by the postal clerk. The amount of time required to perform this operation would make it impossible to verify any more than a minimal amount of mail pieces currently processed by the postal service.

The present invention, in contrast, comprises an incoming mail processing center, which employs one or more mail processing machines, and an outgoing mail processing center, which employs one or more of the same mail processing machines, that is located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center. The incoming mail processing center obtains the mail piece data and uploads the mail piece data to the data center. The data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions, based upon the verification check, to the outgoing mail processing center. The outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions received from the data center to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines to process the mail piece. There is no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in Moore of a method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data that comprises "receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece" as is recited in claim 27.

Even if, for arguments sake, the hand held field reader of Moore was deemed to be analogous with an outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces (which it clearly is not), the system of Moore does not use the instructions downloaded from a data center to control operation of a mail processing machine that performs automated processing of mail pieces to process the mail piece.

There is simply no disclosure, teaching or suggestion in either Hunter or Moore, alone or in combination, of a method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data that comprises "operating a data center for processing mail piece data associated with a mail piece that comprises "receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center; performing a verification check on the mail piece data; downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece" as is recited in claim 27.

For at least the above reasons, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claim 27 is in error and should be reversed. Claims 28-31 are dependent upon claim 27, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 27. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 27, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claims 28-31 is in error and should be reversed.

(a)   Claim 29 is patentable separate and apart from its dependency on claim 27.

Claim 29 is patentable separate and apart from its dependency on claim 27 in that it includes novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claim 29 includes the additional limitations of using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route. The Office Action contends that Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 13, lines 30-55 of Moore are reproduced below.

> The foregoing discussion has been directed to the invention embodied as a postal indicia marking and tracking system. Other embodiments of the system for anti-counterfeiting and anti-diversion systems are also possible. An added feature of the present invention is

the real-time nature of validation in any embodiment.
Piracy, counterfeiting, and/or diversion commonly occur
at the plant or just beyond its gates. The present
system allows the functionality of immediate
interception on the yard, or the backdoor of the plant.
A field reader may be used for inspection at the plant
gate to verify that goods going out of the plant gates
are authentic, marked, and correctly routed. As a
further example, a field reader or point of distribution
and sale reader may be used to "instantly" authenticate
a package module, mailpieces, invoices, or any marked
article at the time of receipt, sale or processing. It
should be understood, however, that this can only
authenticate the printed document, and can not
authenticate any signature affixed thereto which may or
may not be forged. The creation and marking of marks is
real-time. The marker PC at the site reports back to the
host computer and therefore all the markings that have
been prepared for the day's operation will be in the
archives or in the records of the host computer 14.
Immediately after the goods are marked, they can be
inspected and a reading determines the (in)validity of
the mark through the host computer 14.

There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Moore, that discloses, teaches or suggests using mail piece data to determine a delivery route for a mail piece, or of a data center limiting the download of instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

(b)   Claim 30 is patentable separate and apart from its dependency on claim 27.

Claim 30 is patentable separate and apart from its dependency on claim 27 in that it includes novel limitations and a unique combination that would not have been obvious at the time of the invention. Claim 30 includes the additional limitations of using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and using the service class to establish a priority for the download of instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route. The Office Action contends that Fig. 2 and Col. 5, lines 54-63 of Hunter disclose these features. Appellants respectfully disagree. Col. 5, lines 49-63 of Hunter are reproduced below.

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        FIG. 2 shows a flow chart of the operation of data
processing system 40 in scanning a mail piece. At 110
system 40 inputs the next mail piece scan and at 112
tests to determine if the meter identification number is
recognized; that is, is the meter identification number
is legible and valid for this system. If the meter
identification number is recognized then at 114-system
40 checks to determine if that number is included in the
meter inspection file. If the number is not in meter
inspection file 80 then at 116 system 40 tests to
determine if the postage amount is recognized as a valid
amount; that is, is valid for that class of mail and is
legible. If the postage amount and meter identification
number are recognized then at 120 the expenditure record
for the identified meter is incremented.
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There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in Hunter, of any type of determination of service class for a mail piece, or using the service class to establish a priority for the download of instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

B.   The subject matter defined in claim 6 is not obvious over Hunter in view of Moore and further in view of Fleming (U.S. 5,953,710).

Claim 6 is dependent upon claim 1, and therefore includes all of the limitations of claim 1. As noted above, the references to Hunter and Moore do not disclose, teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. The reference to Fleming does not cure any of the above deficiencies, as it was relied upon for other features. For the same reasons given above with respect to claim 1, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection as to claim 6 is in error and should be reversed.

VIII.   Conclusion

In Conclusion, Appellants respectfully submit that the final rejection of claims 1-31 is in error for at least the reasons given above and should, therefore, be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments - Appendix A – Claims Appendix (8 pages)
                    Appendix B – Evidence Appendix (1 page)
                    Appendix C – Related Proceedings Appendix (1 page)

APPENDIX A – Claims Appendix

1.   A mail piece verification system for processing a mail piece in a path of travel, the mail piece having associated therewith mail piece data, the system comprising:

an incoming mail processing center for receiving the mail piece and obtaining the mail piece data, the incoming mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces;

an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in the path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and

a data center in operative communication with the incoming mail processing center and the outgoing mail processing center; and

wherein:

the incoming mail processing center uploads the mail piece data to the data center;

the data center performs a verification check on the mail piece data and downloads instructions based upon the verification check to the outgoing mail processing center; and

the outgoing mail processing center uses the instructions to control operation of at least one of the mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece.

2.   The system of claim 1, wherein:

the incoming mail processing center performs a preliminary check on the mail piece data that is different from the verification check performed by the data center; and

the verification check includes cryptographic calculations to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

3.   The system of claim 2, wherein:

the preliminary check includes a check to confirm that the mail piece data includes at least one of the following: (i) recognition of a valid meter serial number; (ii) a posting date within an acceptable range; and (iii) a valid recipient address; and

the verification check further includes a duplicate detection analysis to determine whether or not the mail piece data has been fraudulently copied.

4.   The system of claim 3, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece;

the outgoing mail processing center represents a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route; and

the data center limits the download of the instructions to the particular one of the plurality of outgoing mail processing centers.

5.   The system of claim 4, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

the system uses the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

6.   The system of claim 5, wherein:

the system assigns a global identification number to the mail piece that is used by the system to access the mail piece data and the instructions associated with the mail piece;

the mail piece is of a physical type; and

the mail piece data includes a postal indicium.

7.   The system of claim 1, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece;

the outgoing mail processing center represents a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route; and

the data center limits the download of the instructions to the particular one of the plurality of outgoing mail processing centers.

8.   The system of claim 7, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

the system uses the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

9.   The system of claim 8, wherein:

the incoming mail processing center performs a preliminary check on the mail piece data that is different from the verification check performed by the data center; and

the verification check includes cryptographic calculations to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

10.   The system of claim 9, wherein:

the preliminary check includes a check to confirm that the mail piece data includes at least one of the following: (i) recognition of a valid meter serial number; (ii) a posting date within an acceptable range; and (iii) a valid recipient address; and

the verification check further includes a duplicate detection analysis to determine whether or not the mail piece data has been fraudulently copied.

11.   The system of claim 1, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

the system uses the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

12.   The system of claim 11, wherein:

the incoming mail processing center performs a preliminary check on the mail piece data that is different from the verification check performed by the data center; and

the verification check includes cryptographic calculations to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

13.   The system of claim 12, wherein:

the system uses the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece;

the outgoing mail processing center represents a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route; and

the data center limits the download of the instructions to the particular one of the plurality of outgoing mail processing centers.

14.   The system of claim 13, wherein:

the preliminary check includes a check to confirm that the mail piece data includes at least one of the following: (i) recognition of a valid meter serial number; (ii) a posting date within an acceptable range; and (iii) a valid recipient address; and

the verification check further includes a duplicate detection analysis to determine whether or not the mail piece data has been fraudulently copied.

15.   A method of operating a mail piece verification system to process a mail piece, the method comprising the step(s) of:

obtaining mail piece data associated with a mail piece using at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces, the plurality of mail processing machines being located at an incoming mail processing center;

uploading the mail piece data to a data center;

performing a verification check on the mail piece data;

downloading instructions based upon the verification check to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing

center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and

using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece.

16.   The method of claim 15, further comprising the step(s) of:

performing a preliminary check on the mail piece data at the incoming mail processing center that is different from the verification checks performed by the data center; and

using cryptographic calculations during the verification check to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

17.   The method of claim 16, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and

limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

18.   The method of claim 17, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

19.   The method of claim 18, further comprising the step(s) of:

assigning a global identification number to the mail piece; and

using the global identification number to access the mail piece data and the instructions associated with the mail piece; and

wherein:

the mail piece is of a physical type; and

the mail piece data includes a postal indicium.

20.   The method of claim 19, further comprising the step(s) of:

within the preliminary check step, checking to confirm that the mail piece data includes at least one of the following: (i) recognition of a valid meter serial number; (ii) a posting date within an acceptable range; and (iii) a valid recipient address; and

within the verification check step, performing a duplicate detection analysis to determine whether or not the mail piece data has been fraudulently copied.

21.   The method of claim 15, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and

limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

22.   The method of claim 21, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

23.   The method of claim 22, further comprising the step(s) of:

performing a preliminary check on the mail piece data at the incoming mail processing center that is different from the verification check performed by the data center; and

using cryptographic calculations during the verification check to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

24.   The method of claim 15, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

using the service class to establish a priority for the upload of mail piece data from the incoming mail processing center to the data center and the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

25.   The method of claim 24, further comprising the step(s) of:

performing a preliminary check on the mail piece data at the incoming mail processing center that is different from the verification check performed by the data center; and

using cryptographic calculations during the verification check to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

26.   The method of claim 25, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and

limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

27.   A method of operating a data center for processing mail piece data associated with a mail piece, the method comprising the step(s) of:

receiving the mail piece data from a remotely located incoming mail processing center, the mail piece data being obtained by at least one of a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces located at the incoming mail processing center;

performing a verification check on the mail piece data;

downloading instructions for processing the mail piece, the instructions being based upon the verification check, to an outgoing mail processing center located downstream in a path of travel from the incoming mail processing center, the outgoing mail processing center including a plurality of mail processing machines that perform automated processing of mail pieces; and

using the instructions to control operation of at least one of the plurality of mail processing machines located at the outgoing mail processing center to process the mail piece.

28.   The method of claim 27, further comprising the step(s) of:

using cryptographic calculations during the verification check to determine whether or not the mail piece data is valid.

29.   The method of claim 28, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a delivery route for the mail piece; and

limiting the download of the instructions to a particular one of a plurality of outgoing mail processing centers that corresponds to the delivery route.

30.   The method of claim 29, further comprising the step(s) of:

using the mail piece data to determine a service class for the mail piece; and

using the service class to establish a priority for the download of instructions from the data center to the outgoing mail processing center.

31.   The method of claim 30, further comprising the step(s) of:

associating the instructions with a global identification number; and

downloading the instructions with the global identification number; and

wherein:

the mail piece is of a physical type; and

the mail piece data includes a postal indicium.

APPENDIX B – EVIDENCE APPENDIX

There is no evidence submitted pursuant to §§ 1.130, 1.131, or 1.132 or any other evidence entered by the examiner and relied upon by Appellants in the appeal.

APPENDIX C – RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

There are no appeals or interferences known to Appellants, their legal representative, or the assignee which may be directly related to, directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in this appeal.